

[Mrs. Hattie Vance]

1

Early Settlement

Gladys Marshall, P. W.

Hill County, Hillsboro

District # 8 Pioneer history

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Page 1

References S-[230?]

A. Consultant - Mrs. Hattie Vance

B. Consultant - Joe Fields Morrор

C. Consultant - Mr. J. R. Thompson

D. Hillsboro Mirror - 1930

E. Consultant - Miss Janet Wood

F. Consultant - Mrs. Tan Brooks

G. Consultant - Mr. A. T. Thompson

Library of Congress

H. Consultant - Mr. T. B. Bond

I. Consultant - Mr. John Abney

J. Consultant - Mr. L. Brin

_____ Mrs. Hattie Vance has lived on South Waco Street, Hillsboro, since 1887. Left a widow, she became a dressmaker during the period of leg-o-mutton sleeves, bustles and trains. Dresses were made of alpaca, or taffeta stiff enough to stand alone and "fit like a glove." The streets were unpaved, and the dust in dry weather was ankle deep and the mud in wet weather was above the shoe tops. Through these streets, carrying their heavy trains, the ladies made their way to church, shopping or on social calls. The first improvement came when the community bought loads of gravel and built walks from the residence section to town. The homes were furnished with stiff formality. The long lace curtains spread out on the floor like trains. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 The carpets were Brussels and rag, and the parlor suites upholstered in red plush. Mrs. Vance remembers the first automobile seen on the streets of Hillsboro and what a sensation it caused, people running from all directions wanting to see it. (A) Captain W. S. Fields was born in Liverty County, Texas, Feb. 1854, attended the schools of his day, and was admitted to the bar before he was twenty one. He entered the newspaper business in 1875 and published The Comanche Chief at Comanche Texas; then he sold his interest in that paper and established The Blade at Meridian. After several years, Captain Fields sold his interest in The Blade, and went to Washington, as correspondent for The Dallas and Galveston News. Later resigned, came to Hillsboro and bought The Hillsboro Reflector until Captain Fields sold his interest in 1895. From 1905 to 1913, he was Editor of The Mirror. Resigning in September 1913, he became Sergeant - of Arms of the House of Representative at Washington. He was clerk in the House, Vice-Clerk of the Senate, and later Sergeant -At -Arms of the Senate. In 1892, he was elected to the twenty-third Texas Legislature and in 1922 was elected to the Legislature as Floterial Representative from Hill and Navarro Counties. In 1915, he was appointed postmaster at Hillsboro and

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resigned his position in Washington to accept that place. He served under both terms of the Wilson 3 Administration and one year under President Harding. Captain Fields was Librarian in Washington but was on his way home on a vacation when the news came of the assassination of President Garfield. He was a member of [the?] Presbyterian church and was active in all public works up until the time of his doeth. (B) Mr. J. R. Thompson came to Texas from Alabama, at the age of sixteen. In 1881, Mr. Thompson disposed of his Freestone County holdings and came to Hillsboro, where he has since resided. From bookkeeper and salesman he rose to his own business, J. R. Thompson Hardware Company. Hillsboro, in 1892, in keeping with its frontier environment, was a wide open town protected by state license, the liquor traffic flourished. The first temperance lodge in Hillsboro was organized in Hillsboro in 1892. Mr. Thompson actively assisted in its organization and was its first president. Mr. Thompson is a member of the church in which he has been a trustee. He served on its board of stewards for more than a third of a century. Since early manhood he has taken an active interest in local, state and National politics. (C)

Captain W. H. Webb, was born in Rutherford County, North Carolina, August 9, 1884. He came to Texas in 1872, and bought the home near Mayfield, where he resided until his recent death. He was one of the builders, forty-eight years 4 ago. of the Old Prairie Dale Baptist Church, around which clings the memories of a large number of Hill County Baptist and which was only recently emerged with another church and moved to Mayfield. Captain Webb was one of the original promoters of the [Itasca?] Cotton Mills, one of the first cotton mills built in the State of Texas, and was president and general manager of the mill for eleven years. (D) Mr. and Mrs., William Wood. Mr. Wood was born at Spring Valley, New York, July 23, 1841. After the civil war they moved to Texas. In 1881 at Hillsboro, he opened a lumber yard for C. T. Lyon. He served as manager of the firm until his death in July, 1910. In the early eighties Mr. Wood was appointed postmaster at Hillsboro and held that position until the first part of President Cleveland's first term when his tenure ended. He was always interested in community civic, moral and religious

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affairs. Possibly no woman contributed more to this city's church and religious life than Mrs. Wood and devoted more of her time to [that?] end. With the late John P. Cox she helped to organize the First Methodist Sunday School in Hillsboro and taught in s me for many years. She also organized the first ladies aid society, now known as the Missionary Society and served as an officer until failing health caused her to retire. Mrs. Wood died July, 1926. (E) 5 Mrs. Tam Brooks. One of the most interesting of our local pioneers is Mrs. Tam Brooks, born in Hillsboro, Mississippi in 1855, and located in Hillsboro, Texas in 1880, a year before the railroad. Mrs. Brooks is a daughter of the late Seaborn Smith, who came to Texas in 1864. They made the trip from Mississippi in horse and ox drawn vehichles, crossing the river at Natches on flat boats. It took seven weeks to reach their destination. They settled near Peoria where they lived until 1880, when they moved to Hillsboro and the following year they erected the family homestead which Mrs. Brooks has occupied for half a century. Part of the roof originally put on the house is still in use and in good condition. She has a piano bought in 1890, and furniture that dates back many years before that time. The house was heated by two Franklin stoves, built like fireplaces and one of them is still in use. Mrs. Brooks recalls, groceries, drugs and other supplies were sent in by ox cart from Houston and New Orleans. Traffic was through the little village of Waco. Families bought their sugar and flour by the barrel and green coffee by the sack, parching it in the fireplaces. She is the only surviving charter member of the Liberty Temple Presbyterian Church. (F) 6 Mrs. A. T. Thompson came to Hillsboro in 1881 from Dixon County Tennessee and was married to Mrs. D. L. Kittie Brooks. Thirty days after his marriage, Mr. Thompson shipped into Hillsboro the first carload of lumber ever brought into the town and built his home at 108 Corsicana Street. Being a lover of trees he put out trees at his expense the entire length of Corsicana Street, beginning on Smith Street and coming around a block on North Pleasant Street. In 1892, he built four brick buildings on Elm Street, the first business houses to be erected on that street. A few years later he built the Thompson Flats. He also has the honor of improving the first street in Hillsboro, putting 900 loads of gravel on West Elm Street from Katy depot to the court house square. The gravel was taken from the present site of the Hillsboro Cotton Mills. Mr. Thompson was

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among the first directors of the Lake Park Association, planned and built the old pavillion and supervised all the lake park improvements. He was also one of the directors of the Old Soldiers and Old Settlers Association, built the pavillion, made many improvements at their Reunion Grounds, planned and built the first elevator in Hillsboro, [built?] the First Methodist personage on South Waco Street; and the Line [Street?] Methodist Church, helped to build the Hillsboro Cotton Mills; was one of the directors and president for two years. Acting for the 7 city Mr. Thompson purchased from George L. Porter the Ridge Park Cemetery Association for the sum of \$58 per acre and with the assistance of Mr. E. S. Davis laid out the cemetery and set out trees. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson had no children of their own but reared several nephews and nieces. (G) T. B. Bond. The late Wm. Bond moved to Millsboro from Bryan in 1881, and he and his son, T. B. Bond, opened a drug business in the building now occupied by the Ritz [Theatre?]. After three years they built a two story building on the lot east and moved into same, remaining there until March, 1895, when they purchased and moved into their present location. In 1913 the building was remodeled and a handsome modern front put in and interior was re-arranged with new fixtures. Their business consisted only of selling drugs and filling prescriptions. It is the second oldest retail store in Texas under the same management. Mr. Wm Bond remained active in the business until a few months before his death on January 16, 1928. Both father and son have been prominently identified with the growth of Hillsboro and Hill County. (H) Mrs. Fannie Woof Thompson come to Hillsbor to make her home with her daughters; Mrs. Upshaw and Mrs. Abney in 1885. On 8 account of declining health Judge Abney moved with his family, including Mrs. Thompson to San Antonio in 1893, and a few months later to Boerne, Texas. After the death of their parents she took the three Abney children to Georgetown and placed them in school. In 1909, with John Abney and his two sisters, she returned to Hillsboro where she resided until her death. (I) Mr. and Mrs. L. Brin of Corsicana Street, are truly pioneers. They came to Hillsboro when it was a small village. They donated valuable land to make the City Park. (J)